

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Previously Presented) A method of manufacturing a water-absorbing shaped body, comprising the steps of:

polymerizing an aqueous solution including a photo polymerization initiator and a water-soluble ethylenically unsaturated monomer containing at least 50 mol% of acrylic acid, an acrylic acid salt or both by radiating light intermittently onto the aqueous solution;

shaping the polymerized aqueous solution; and

drying the water-absorbing shaped body obtained after the polymerization.

2. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein:

the aqueous solution is polymerized on a surface of another base material or inside another base material.

3. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein:

the aqueous solution before the light is radiated includes a cross-linking agent in advance.

4. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein:

the aqueous solution further includes a radical polymerization initiator other than the photo polymerization initiator.

5. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein:

polymerization is furthered by applying heat after the light is radiated.

6. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein:

the aqueous solution is shaped into at least one shape selected from the group consisting

of a string shape, a fiber shape, a sheet shape, a film shape, a cubic shape, and a spherical shape.

7. (Previously Presented) A method of manufacturing a water-absorbing shaped body, comprising the step of:

a first polymerization step of radiating light onto an aqueous solution including a photo polymerization initiator and a water-soluble ethylenically unsaturated monomer containing at least 50 mol% of acrylic acid, an acrylic acid salt or both, so as to polymerize a part of the water-soluble ethylenically unsaturated monomer to thicken the aqueous solution;

a shaping step of stopping radiation of the light, and shaping into a desired shape, the aqueous solution thickened in the first polymerization step; and

a second polymerization step of radiating light onto the aqueous solution shaped in the shaping step, so that a rest of the water-soluble ethylenically unsaturated monomer is polymerized, the aqueous solution having been shaped and including the polymer as a part thereof.

8. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 7, wherein:

the aqueous solution before the first polymerization step is performed includes a cross-linking agent in advance.

9. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 7, wherein:

the second polymerization step is performed on the aqueous solution which is being shaped and which includes the polymer as a part thereof.

10. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 7, wherein:

the aqueous solution further includes a radical polymerization initiator other than the photo polymerization initiator.

11. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 7, wherein:

polymerization is furthered by applying heat in the second polymerization step.

12. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 7, wherein:

the shaping step is performed on a fiber base material or inside a fiber base material.

13. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 7, wherein:

the shaping step is performed right after the first polymerization step.

14. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 7, wherein:

the first polymerization step and the shaping step are performed on a continuous belt.

15. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 7, wherein:

the aqueous solution is shaped into at least one shape selected from the group consisting of a string shape, a fiber shape, a sheet shape, a film shape, a cubic shape, and a spherical shape.

16. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 6, wherein the water-absorbing shaped body is porous.

17. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 15, wherein the water-absorbing shaped body is porous.

18. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein:

the polymerization is performed by (i) thickening the aqueous solution irradiating the aqueous solution with light, (ii) stopping irradiating the aqueous solution with light and shaping the aqueous solution into a desired shape, and (iii) further irradiating the aqueous solution with light.

19. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein the water-soluble monomer contains at least 80 mol% of acrylic acid, an acrylic acid salt or both.

20. (Previously Presented) The method as set forth in claim 19, wherein the water-soluble monomer contains at least 95 mol% of acrylic acid, an acrylic acid salt or both.

21. (New) A method of manufacturing a water-absorbing shaped body, comprising the steps of:

polymerizing an aqueous solution without the presence of a thickening agent and including a photo polymerization initiator and a water-soluble ethylenically unsaturated monomer containing at least 50 mol% of acrylic acid, an acrylic acid salt or both by radiating light intermittently onto the aqueous solution until the aqueous solution becomes viscous and shapeable;

shaping the polymerized aqueous solution; and

drying the water-absorbing shaped body obtained after the polymerization.

22. (New) A method of manufacturing a water-absorbing shaped body, comprising the step of:

a first polymerization step of radiating light onto an aqueous solution not containing a thickening agent and including a photo polymerization initiator and a water-soluble ethylenically unsaturated monomer containing at least 50 mol% of acrylic acid, an acrylic acid salt or both, so as to polymerize a part of the water-soluble ethylenically unsaturated monomer to thicken the aqueous solution until a shapeable viscosity is obtained;

a shaping step of stopping radiation of the light, and shaping into a desired shape, the aqueous solution thickened in the first polymerization step; and

a second polymerization step of radiating light onto the aqueous solution shaped in the shaping step, so that a rest of the water-soluble ethylenically unsaturated monomer is polymerized, the aqueous solution having been shaped and including the polymer as a part thereof.